

What Are Kiln Cookies & Why Do We Use Them?

- **Definition:** A kiln cookie (or glaze catcher) is a flat piece of bisqued clay placed underneath glazed pottery during firing.
- **Purpose:** They catch accidental glaze runs, drips, or volatile glaze spatters, glaze surface flashing (shiny clear surface glaze deposits), saving expensive kiln shelves from permanent glaze damage or grinding.

Material & Clay Choice

- **Best Clay Body:** Always make cookies out of a compatible clay body (Cone 6 or Higher) so they do not warp, melt, or vitrify completely and stick to the shelf.
- **Kiln Wash:** Coat the top surface of the cookie with a layer of kiln wash so if glaze *does* run off your piece and onto the cookie, your piece can still be popped off easily without ruining the base of the piece.

Making Cookies

- **Size & Thickness:**
 - Thick enough to support your piece
 - 1/2" past the diameter of your piece if you use drippy glazes or many layers of glaze
 - Large enough for the bottom of your piece if using underglazes/ S&C or celadon's
 - Large cookies, over 10"x10", need to be cut into sections because they crack.
- **One or Two Cookies**
 - If you leave 1/4" unglazed at the bottom, and use a stable glaze = 1 cookie 1/2" larger than the bottom of your piece
 - If you leave 1/4" unglazed at the bottom, with a runny glaze = 2 cookies (smaller cookie should be 1/2" smaller than bottom of piece)
 - If your piece has a foot or needs to be elevated - two cookies
- **Stacking Cookies**
 - Peg Board, Loofah, Cookie(s), Loofah, Peg Board (repeat for more cookies), weight on top to keep cookies flat
 - Unstack, replace loofah(s) and rearrange cookies every 2-3 days to prevent loofahs from molding. This also helps cookies dry faster.
- **Labeling Cookies**
 - Write your name or initials on the bottom of your cookie(s) with a China Marker

Usage & Firing Guidelines

- **Can Cookies Be Reused?** Yes, as long as they remain flat and free of glaze drips or glaze surface flashing. Once a cookie catches a significant glaze run, toss it out or re-apply kiln wash—a glazed cookie can stick to the next piece fired on top of it.
- **Bisque Firing:** Cookies must be fully bisque fired before being used under glaze pieces in a high-fire kiln; using greenware cookies under glazed pots risks moisture pops and uneven shrinkage.
- **Placement:** Ensure the cookie sits completely flat on the shelf and does not wobble under the piece, as an unstable cookie can cause tall work to tip during firing.

Care, Handling & Disposal

- **Inspecting Before Use:** Check cookies for hairline cracks or warping before placing them under a piece. Cracked cookies can break mid-firing and cause your piece to tilt.
- **Disposal:** Throw away cracked, warped, or glaze-pitted cookies.